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MELPOMENE:

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O R

The REGIONS of

TERROR and PITY.

A N

O D E.



L O N D O N : Printed in the YEAR 1757.



[3]

MELPOMENE:

A N

O D E.

I.

QUEEN of the human heart ! at whose command
The swelling tides of mighty Passion rise ;
MELPOMENE, support my vent'rous hand,
And aid thy suppliant in his bold emprise,
From the gay scenes of pride
Do thou his footsteps guide
To Nature's awful courts, where nurs'd of yore,
Young SHAKESPEAR, Fancy's child, was taught his various lore.

A 2

II. So

II.

So may his favour'd eye explore the source;
 To few reveal'd, whence human sorrows charm:
 So may his numbers, with pathetic force,
 Bid *Terror* shake us, or *Compassion* warm,
 As different strains controul
 The movements of the soul,
 Adjust its passions, harmonize its tone,
 To feel for others' woe, or nobly bear its own.

III.

Deep in the covert of a shadowy grove,
 Mid broken rocks where dashing currents play;
 Dear to the pensive pleasures, dear to love,
 And *Damon's* Muse, that breathes her melting lay,
 This ardent prayer was made.
 When lo! the secret shade,
 As conscious of some heavenly presence, shook---
 Strength, firmness, reason, all---my' astonish'd soul forsook.

IV. Ah!

IV.

Ah! whither Goddess! whither am I borne?

To what wild region's necromantic shore?

These pannicks whence? and why my bosom torne

With sudden terrors never felt before?

Darkness inwraps me round,

While from the vast profound

Emerging spectres dreadful shapes assume,

And gleaming on my sight, add horror to the gloom.

V.

Ha! what is he whose fierce indignant eye,

Denouncing vengeance, kindles into flame?

Whose boisterous fury blows a storm so high,

As with its thunder shakes his labouring frame.

What can such rage provoke?

His words their passage choke:

His eager steps, nor time nor truce allow,

And dreadful dangers wait the menace of his brow.

VI. Protect

VI.

Protect me, Goddess! whence that fearful shriek
 Of consternation? as grim Death had laid
 His icy fingers on some guilty cheek,
 And all the powers of manhood shrunk dismay'd:
 Ah see! besmear'd with gore,
 Revenge stands threatening o'er
 A pale delinquent, whose retorted eyes
 In vain for pity call---the wretched victim dies.

VII.

Nor long the space---abandon'd to Despair,
 With eyes aghast, or hopeless fixt on earth,
 This slave of passion rends his scatter'd hair,
 Beats his sad breast, and execrates his birth:
 While torn within, he feels
 The pangs of whips and wheels;
 And sees, or fancies, all the fiends below,
 Beckoning his frightened soul to :

VIII.

Before my wondering sense new phantoms dance,
 And stamp their horrid shapes upon my brain---
 A wretch with jealous brow, and eyes askance,
 Feeds all in secret on his bosom pain.

Fond love, fierce hate, assail ;

Alternate they prevail :

While conscious pride and shame with rage conspire,
 And urge the latent spark to flames of torturing fire.

IX.

The storm proceeds---his changeful visage trace :

From rage to Madness every feature breaks.

A growing phrenzy grins upon his face,

And in his frightful stare Distraction speaks :

His straw-invested head

Proclaims all reason fled ;

And not a tear bedews those vacant eyes---

But songs and shouts succeed, and laughter-mingled sighs.

X. Yet,

X.

Yet, yet again!---a Murderer's hand appears
 Grasping a pointed dagger stain'd with blood!
 His look malignant chills with boding fears,
 That check the current of life's ebbing flood.
 In midnight's darkest clouds
 The dreary miscreant throwds
 His felon step---as 'twere to darkness given
 To dim the watchful eye of all-pervading Heaven.

XI.

And hark! ah Mercy! whence that hollow sound!
 Why with strange horror starts my bristling hair?
 Earth opens wide, and from unhallow'd ground
 A pallid Ghost flow-rising steals on air,
 To where a mangled corse
 Expos'd without remorse
 Lies shroudless, unentomb'd, he points the way---
 Points to the prowling wolf exultant o'er his prey.

XII. " Why

XII.

" Was it for this, he cries, with kindly shower
 " Of daily gifts the traytor I carefs'd ?
 " For this array'd him in the robe of power,
 " And lodg'd my royal secrets in his breast ?
 " O kindness ill repay'd !
 " To bare the murdering blade
 " Against my life !---may Heav'n his guilt explore,
 " And to my suffering race their splendid rights restore."

XIII.

He said, and stalk'd away.---Ah Goddess ! cease,
 Thus with terrific forms to rack my brain ;
 These horrid phantoms shake the throne of peace,
 And Reason calls her boasted powers in vain,
 Then change thy magic wand,
 Thy dreadful troops disband,
 And gentler shapes, and softer scenes disclose,
 To melt the feeling heart, yet sooth its tenderest woes.

XIV.

The fervent prayer was heard, --- With hideous sound,
 Her ebon gates of darkness open flew;
 A dawning twilight cheers the dread profound,
 The train of terror vanishes from view.
 More mild enchantments rise;
 New scenes salute my eyes,
 Groves, fountains, bowers, and temples grace the plain,
 And turtles coo around, and nightingales complain.

XV.

And every myrtle bower and cypress grove,
 And every solemn temple teems with life;
 Here glows the scene with fond but hapless love,
 There with the deeper woes of human strife.
 In groups around the lawn,
 By fresh disasters drawn,
 The sad spectators seem transfix'd in woe,
 And pitying sighs are heard, and heart-felt sorrows flow.

XVI.

Behold that beauteous maid ! her languid head,
 Bends like a drooping lily charg'd with rain ;
 With floods of tears she bathes a Lover dead,
 In brave assertion of her honour slain.
 Her bosom heaves with sighs,
 To Heaven she lifts her eyes,
 With grief beyond the power of words oppress'd,
 Sinks on the lifeless corse, and dies upon his breast.

XVII.

How strong the bands of Friendship ? yet, alas !
 Behind yon mouldering tower with ivy crown'd,
 Of two, the foremost in her sacred class,
 One from his friend receives the fatal wound !
 What could such fury move !
 What but ill-fated love !
 The same fair object each fond heart enthralls,
 And he, the favour'd youth, her hapless victim falls.

XVIII.

Can aught so deeply sway the generous mind
To mutual truth, as female trust in love ?
Then what relief shall yon fair mourner find,
Scorn'd by the man who should her plaints remove ?
By fair, but false Pretence,
She lost her innocence ;
And that sweet babe, the fruit of treacherous art,
Claspt in her arms expires, and breaks the parent's heart.

XIX.

Ah ! who to pomp or grandeur would aspire ?
Kings are not rais'd above misfortune's frown.
That form, so graceful even in mean attire,
Sway'd once a sceptre, once sustain'd a crown.
From Filial rage and strife,
To screen his closing life,
He quits his throne, a father's sorrow feels,
And in the lap of Want his patient head conceals.

XX. More

XX.

More yet remain'd---but lo! the PENSIVE QUEEN
 Appears confest before my dazzled sight;
 Grace in her steps, and softness in her mien,
 The face of sorrow mingled with delight.
 Not such her nobler frame,
 When kindling into flame,
 And bold in Virtue's cause, her zeal aspires
 To waken guilty pangs, or breathe heroic fires.

XXI.

Aw'd into silence, my rapt soul attends---
 The POWER, with eyes complacent, saw my fear;
 And, as with grace ineffable she bends,
 These accents vibrate on my listening ear.
 "Aspiring son of art,
 "Know, tho' thy feeling heart
 "Glow with these wonders to thy fancy shewn,
 "Still may the Delian God thy powerless toils disown.

XXII. " A

XXII.

- “ A thousand tender scenes of soft distress
 “ May swell thy breast with sympathetic woes;
 “ A thousand such dread forms on fancy press,
 “ As from my dreary realms of darkness rose,
 “ Whence SHAKESPEAR’S chilling fears,
 “ And OTWAY’S melting tears---
 “ That awful gloom, this melancholy plain,
 “ The *types* of every *theme* that suits the TRAGIC STRAIN.

XXH.

- “ But dost thou worship Nature night and morn,
 “ And all due honour to her precepts pay?
 “ Can’st thou the lure of Affectation scorn,
 “ Pleas’d in the simpler paths of Truth to stray?
 “ Hast thou the Graces fair
 “ Invok’d with ardent prayer?
 “ They must attire, as Nature must impart,
 “ The sentiment sublime, the language of the heart.

XXIV. “ Then,

XXIV.

“ Then, if assenting Genius pour his ray,
 “ Warm with inspiring influence on thy breast ;
 “ Taste, judgment, fancy, if thou can’st display,
 “ And the deep source of Passion stand confest ;
 “ Then may the listening train,
 “ Affected, feel thy strain ;
 “ Feel Grief or Terror, Rage or Pity move :
 “ Change with thy varying scenes, and every scene approve.”

XXV.

Humbled before her sight, and bending low,
 I kiss’d the borders of her crimson vest ;
 Eager to speak, I felt my bosom glow,
 But Fear upon my lips her seal imprest.
 While awe-struck thus I stood,
 The bowers, the lawn, the wood,
 The FORM CELESTIAL, fading on my view,
 Dissolv’d in liquid air, and all the vision flew.

 F I N I S.

m



14

and



